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August 7, 2012

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

The appropriate expenditure of taxpayer funds by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is of the utmost importance to the committee. Given the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) recent findings¹ on duplication and overlap within federal programs, I respectfully request documents and communications relating to the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) participation in the White House Council on Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers ("Council") and DOL's Office of Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers ("Auto Recovery Office").

On June 23, 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13509, creating the White House Council on Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers to "establish a coordinated Federal response to issues that particularly impact automotive communities and workers and to ensure that Federal programs and policies address and take into account these concerns."² Under this executive order, you, as Secretary of Labor, were made a co-chair of the Council with the Director of the National Economic Council.³ On July 6, 2011, the president signed Executive Order 13578, moving the Council responsibilities to DOL and solely under your purview.⁴

Over the last three years, conditions for the auto production and parts manufacturing industry have improved. However, it is unclear whether the Auto Recovery Office has played a role in that improvement. DOL's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget request mentions none of the Auto

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Report GAO-12-342SP, at 259. (Feb. 2012)
<http://gao.gov/assets/590/588818.pdf>

² *Federal Register*, Vol. 74, No. 122, at 30903 (June 26, 2009). Executive Order 13509 expired on June 26, 2011.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Federal Register*, Vol. 76, No. 132, at 40591 (July 11, 2011).

Recovery Office's efforts over the past year or its plans for the next year. The Auto Recovery Office's funding history is also absent from the DOL's budget request.

Apparently recognizing the limited value of the Auto Recovery Office, GAO's 2012 Annual Report specifically identified the Auto Recovery Office as a program that could be eliminated.⁵ GAO further determined that neither the original Council nor the Auto Recovery Office fulfilled half of the responsibilities they were charged with under Executive Orders 13509 and 13578.⁶ Based on its findings, GAO recommended that "unless the Secretary of Labor can demonstrate how the Auto Recovery Office has uniquely assisted auto communities, Congress may wish to consider prohibiting DOL from spending any of its appropriations on the Auto Recovery Office and instead require that the department direct the funds to other federal programs that provide funding directly to affected communities."⁷

To better evaluate the Auto Recovery Office's benefit to taxpayers and our economy, please provide the following to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce **no later than August 21, 2012**:

1. A list of the dates and attendees for all Council meetings, including copies of each meeting's agenda, and summaries of decisions made at each meeting.
2. All communications between any representative of a nonprofit organization, business, labor organization, state and local government agency, elected official, and other interested party and Council members and/or Auto Recovery Office staff concerning federal assistance for auto workers and auto communities.
3. A list of all locations assisted by Council members and/or Auto Recovery Office staff – include a list of all individuals and organizations with whom the member or staff met, an accounting of all expenses incurred in connection with each location visited, and an explanation of the financial and/or technical assistance rendered to each location.
4. All documents and communications transmitted to the Executive Office of the President (EOP) providing advice on pending legislation since September 23, 2009.
5. All documents and communications transmitted to the EOP providing advice on changes to federal policies and programs since September 23, 2009.
6. Identify all meetings and telephone conversations between you and any individual within the EOP concerning the Council and/or the Auto Recovery Office, include the date, list of attendees, and summary of issues discussed.

⁵ See GAO 2012 Annual Report, *supra* 1, at 259.

⁶ *Id.* at 260.

⁷ *Id.* at 259.

7. An accounting of all federal funds used by the Council and/or the Auto Recovery Office from September 23, 2009 to June 30, 2012, including the purpose for which each expense was incurred.
8. All documents and communications relating to the Council and/or the Auto Recovery Office's spending plans from FY 2009 to FY 2013, and the budget request being produced for FY 2014.
9. All documents and communications relating to the commissioning of a report⁸ by the Center for Automotive Research for the Auto Recovery Office, including, but not limited to the records concerning the bidding process to do this report and funding to undertake the study.
10. An outline of the processes the Auto Recovery Office uses to monitor its activities, measure its results, and evaluate the areas in which it needs improvement.
11. All documents and communications provided the GAO in preparation of its reports.

If you are unable to provide the requested information and materials by the date specified, please inform the committee in writing why you cannot meet the deadline, and the date by which you will provide the requested information. If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Joe Wheeler of the committee staff at (202) 225-7101.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce



JUDY BIGGERT
Member of Congress



GLENN "GT" THOMPSON
Member of Congress



TODD ROKITA
Member of Congress

⁸ Center for Automotive Research, *Repurposing Former Automotive Manufacturing Sites*. (November 2011)
<http://www.dol.gov/autocommunities/Repurposing/RepurposedFacilities.pdf>

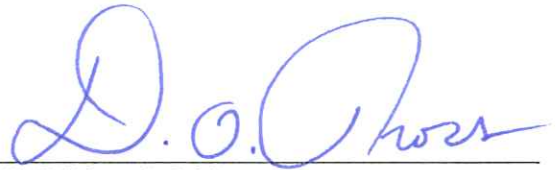
The Honorable Hilda L. Solis

August 7, 2012

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LARRY BUCSHON
Member of Congress



DENNIS A. ROSS
Member of Congress



MIKE KELLY
Member of Congress

Enclosure

CC: The Honorable George Miller, Senior Democratic Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce